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SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF OXFORDSHIRE.

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THE following notes have come to hand from various sources, or have been jotted down by me, since my book on the birds of this county was published in 1889, and form a report on Oxfordshire Ornithology down to the end of the year 1890.

OSPREY.—Mr. W. Newton, Jun., informs me that a female bird of this species was shot at North Stoke, and is still preserved.

PEREGRINE FALCON.—Mr. Darbey tells me that a Peregrine was killed in Tythrop Park in the early part of January, 1890. On March 15th, 1890, I saw one on the wing in Blackamore Meadow, in this parish. From its size, length of wings and tail, it must have been a female. An eyess falcon was shot at Waterperry about Dec. 26th, 1890, and an adult falcon in Bagley Wood, Berks, shortly afterwards: both these were taken to Mr. Darbey.

HOBBY.—I observed one wheeling about over the Swere Valley, in this parish, on May 11th, 1889. After a short time it soared into the air to a great height over my head, in circles, and then flew in an easterly direction. It was moulting its primaries, my glasses showing a gap in each wing very plainly. An old bird was shot near the Cowley road terminus of the tramway at Oxford, at the end of August or early in September, 1889, and taken to Mr. Darbey, where I afterwards saw it. Mr. J. G. Cornish, writing in 'The Field' of May 10th, 1890, upon "The Haunts of

ZOOLOGIST.—JULY, 1892.

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the Hobby," says:—"Hobbies used to be common in the neighbourhood of Oxford thirty years ago. An old man told me that he used constantly to see these birds hawking for mayflies when he was fishing in the upper river. One that he stuffed was shot as it was flying over Witney Street." Mr. F. W. Lambert, of Oxford, mentioned in the 'Oxford Times' of June 7th, 1890, that a few days previously he found the decomposed body of a Hobby on the edge of the Otmore country: he also writes me word that he had information of Hobbies breeding at Waterperry in 1890, and of a bird of the year which was shot there, and brought to the city for preservation.

KESTREL.—Mr. J. Baldwin Young informs me he found a nest in a hollow tree at Bletchington in the early summer of 1890.

MERLIN.—The Rev. Murray A. Mathew writes me word that this species was often brought to Osman, the then Oxford bird-stuffer, in his time. He has a fine male which struck at a birdcatcher's call-bird and was netted. Mr. Wyatt, the Banbury birdstuffer, saw a blue male on the wing near the Castle Gardens, Banbury, on March 3rd, 1888.

TAWNY OWL.—Mr. Bartlett, of Banbury, showed me three eggs of this bird, which were taken in the last week of February, 1890. The bird was caught on the nest.

BARN OWL.—"C. W. R.," writing in the 'Oxford Times,' 1890, mentions having climbed, on April 15th, to an old crow's nest in the fork of an oak wood, in the parish of Whichwood. A Barn Owl flew off the nest, which contained three young Owls and two addled eggs, also six dead field mice. One of the old ones came and sat on the tree close to the observer. The young appeared to be about fourteen days old.

LONG-EARED OWL.—Mr. W. Lambert informs me that two were shot in Horton Wood about Oct. 19th, 1888.

PALLAS'S SHRIKE.—One shot at Wardington in the last week of November, 1890, came into my possession in the next month (Zool. 1890, p. 28).

RED-BACKED SHRIKE.—Mr. F. C. Aplin saw one between Woodstock and Oxford on May 22nd, 1889. A pair were shot by the canal opposite Bodicote in the second week of July, 1890. Mr. F. W. Lambert saw a male near Horsepath as early as May 1st, 1890.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.—Mr. F. W. Lambert informs me that

one was seen by a friend of his flying about the tower of Wood Eaton church on Sept. 28th, 1889. This is unusually late.

PIED FLYCATCHER.—Mr. W. W. Fowler wrote me word that a pair were seen in the Parks at Oxford on April 30th, 1889; they went on at once.

DIPPER.—I saw at Broughton, on March 9th, 1890, a bird which I have not the least doubt was a Dipper. The stream, which used to work the now disused mill, is an attractive looking place for this species, the banks high and steep, and overhung with bushes, the under-banks shelving, and about the bed of the stream some large stones, roots, &c. As I crossed the bridge the bird rose from this stony part and sped down stream in true Dipper fashion. It settled on a bit of shelving bank further down, where I could just see it fidgiting about with the usual jerky motions. But still its head was turned from me, so that I could not see its white breast, and as I impatiently moved forward to get a clearer view, away it went, and the stream is there so overgrown with bushes that I lost sight of it, and could not find it again.

REDWING.—On March 9th, 1889, the day after a heavy gale, with snow and rain, Fieldfares were very numerous, and Redwings even more so, swarming in the meadows. The afternoon was mild and sunny, and a perfect babel of twittering came from the flocks of birds sitting on the tops of the tall trees in the hedgerows of one long meadow in this parish—a very favourite haunt of both species. Mingled with the twittering were a few sweeter notes of the Redwings, and an occasional “qui qui qui” of the Fieldfares. One Redwing, sitting by itself, sang its song, “tui tui tui tri tri tri” (as rendered by Mr. Howard Saunders), very sweetly. Though possessing much less variety than the Song Thrush, the notes are if anything sweeter, and much wilder. On the 30th, when I observed a good-sized flock of Fieldfares, I could see no Redwings, and I have often remarked that the latter are not seen with us so late in the spring as the former, which often stay till after the middle of April and sometimes still later.

BLACKBIRD.—Especially abundant in the autumn of 1889. Mr. Foster Melliar counted thirteen cock Blackbirds on the lawn at North Aston Hall on Nov. 25th.

RING OUZEL.—I examined, in the birdstuffer's shop at Chipping Norton, two males shot near there in the spring of 1890. One of them was much pied about the head (which is not at all

unusual with these birds), and had the feathers of the tibia also white.

REDBREAST.—On March 30th, 1890, I examined a nest with three eggs in the ivy on the wall of a house in Bloxham. The bird had been building a long time. Foundation of dead leaves, honeysuckle, bark, &c., which apparently kept slipping down and away from the wall; so that the nest was about ten inches wide at the base and six or seven inches thick. This great structure was very conspicuous, and was then partly kept up by some long stalks of growing ivy leaves inclosed in it. It sloped up to the top (the slope being about ten inches long), where a nest of moss, wool, and hair, lined with the latter, was formed. The leaves used were of various kinds, many of them beech.

NIGHTINGALE.—Abundant about Oxford and in mid-Oxon. Mr. F. W. Lambert, of Oxford, writes me word that in the course of a day's walk round Marston, Headington, Elsfeld, Wood Eaton, Beckley, and Noke, he has met with perhaps twenty birds. He once heard five singing at the same time in Marston Copse. The nest of the Nightingale is usually found with its full complement of eggs in Oxon in the third week in May. Mr. Lambert has given me the following list of nests found, confirming this:—31st May, 1885, five eggs; 15th May, 1886, five eggs; 16th May, 1886, four eggs; 23rd May, 1886, five eggs; 23rd May, 1887, five eggs; 19th May, 1889, five eggs; 3rd June, 1888, five young; 10th June, 1888, five eggs; 17th May, 1890, five eggs; 19th May, 1890, five eggs. One of the keepers at Combury Park told me in July, 1889, that they had four pairs there that spring. Charles Townsend, a gardener, of Bloxham, remarked to me about the strange disappearance of this species from the parish. They used to frequent most of the spinneys about the village, but he never heard one now. He had been within a few yards of the birds, and had taken their nests and eggs. A friend living here tells me that Nightingales frequented the village until about ten or fifteen years ago. They always sang in his plantation near the house, and even in a Portugal laurel within a few yards of the windows. One of the last nests found in this neighbourhood was found in 1886 by Mr. E. Colegrove in a spinney at Milcombe; another nest was found at Holywell, on the edge of Tadmarton Heath (in the fox-cover of which I heard a bird in 1880), a few years before that. The Nightingale is still common at Oxford

and in other parts of mid-Oxon. Several nests were found at Bletchington in 1890. Mr. Fowler always finds a few about Kingham. Mr. Reeve, of Trinity College, kindly submitted for my inspection a local Nightingale's egg, one of five found on May 26th, 1890, of the variety of a bluish green ground-colour, mottled over with reddish brown. This variety resembles the eggs of the Blue-throated Warbler, and shows the relationship between the species. The arrival of this bird at Oxford on April 20th, 1890, was noted by three observers in the 'Oxford Times.' One of them (Mr. P. Taplin) wrote, on May 10th, that four or five could then be heard in full song on the northern outskirts of the city.

STONECHAT.—Mr. F. W. Lambert informs me that the Stonechat is found in some numbers on Open Brasenose, a furzy common between Cowley and Horsepath. He once found a nest containing five eggs in the bank of a dry ditch in a lane leading on to the Woodstock road near Begbroke. A male shot near the Banbury Cemetery on Feb. 22nd, 1890, was probably returning to its summer quarters.

WHEATEAR.—I received from Mr. Fowler a male Wheatear, shot at Oxford on March 26th, 1889—a rather early date for Oxon. It measured 6·3 in total length, and had almost entirely lost the brown edges to the feathers. On May 10th, 1890, I observed a beautiful large bright male in a meadow near Great Barford. It sang, not only from the top of a tall hedge, but also when sitting on the larger branches of a still leafless ash tree. This, no doubt, was an example of the large race which passes England on migration to its northern breeding grounds late in the spring. Two (ordinary) birds appeared on the return passage on a ploughing in this parish on Aug. 23rd, 1890.

REED WARBLER.—A nest of this species, now in the University Museum, was taken from a bush of *Althrea frutex*, six feet from the ground, in the Botanic Garden in 1866. In this nest a young Cuckoo was hatched. On May 31st, 1890, Mr. Fowler showed me a nest of this species at "Parson's Pleasure," Oxford, placed in a privet-bush at least six or seven feet from the ground, formed of long grasses, hair, &c., and containing four eggs. The bird sang nervously when close to us. The same day I heard two Reed Warblers singing in a thick belt of willows (no reeds) at Osney lock-weir, and another in the willows a little lower down stream.

SEDGE WARBLER.—Mr. F. W. Lambert informs me that two were seen, and one shot, near Wood Eaton on Oct. 23rd, 1889.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER.—Mr. Lambert tells me that in the spring of 1889 he saw about a dozen one morning on Open Brasenose, where they breed. He has found a nest of young there, and has also noticed the species near Marston Copse, near Elsfield, and on the road between Stow Wood and Islip. A nest, taken in Stow Wood some years ago, is in the University Museum. The Grasshopper Warbler frequents Milcombe Gorse, near Bloxham, annually. A nest with eggs was found there a year or two ago, in the thick dead grass under a gorse-bush. I heard the birds in 1890. This gorse is near, and must have once joined, Tadmarton Heath. On July 19th, 1890, I heard one of these birds "reeling" in some wheat fields in the flat, rather treeless bit of country south-east of Bloxham towards Barford. I heard it in the same locality in 1887 and 1889. Mr. Lambert found a nest in a mass of dry grass matted with brambles on Shotover Hill (from which the bird was disturbed), on June 3rd, 1890. It contained three newly-hatched young, an addled egg, and the egg of a Cuckoo. A friend of his found another nest, containing two eggs, in a bed of nettles in the lane adjoining Marston Copse, near Old Headington, on May 17th, in the same year.

BLACKCAP.—On Dec. 20th, 1890, there was six inches of snow on the ground, and the cold had been intense for some days—very hard frost on the previous night; so that, on looking out of the window of a friend's house in Bloxham, I was surprised to see a female Blackcap feeding on the berries of a Cotoneaster in the low shrubs close to the window, although I knew the Blackcap was a fairly hardy bird. In view of its tameness, and almost certain fate at the hands (or claws) of the numerous cats on the premises, or from the gun of my friend's man—who was waging a Sparrow war, and would in all probability take a little brown bird like this for his lawful prey—the bird was shot and proved to be very fat. It looked well and happy, but had an enlargement of one or two toes. I can hardly believe it possible that this bird would have lived through the long bitter frost which continued for weeks and killed so many resident and winter birds. A good many Blackcaps attempted to winter in other parts of the country.

WOOD WARBLER.—Mr. Lambert saw one of these local birds at "Parson's Pleasure," on May 2nd, 1889; it was singing; he also observed three at Holton stone pits, near Wheatley, in the same year. I found two males in song and one hen calling in a small oak wood near Great Tew on May 18th, 1890. Mr. Lambert heard one singing in a field adjoining Christ Church Meadow on May 1st, 1890.

CHIFFCHAFF.—Mr. Lambert saw "a few" Chiffchaffs near Beckley on Oct. 12th, 1890: warm weather. The Chiffchaff occasionally stays well into October: in 1881 I frequently heard it in that month, and in December, 1887, I examined a stuffed specimen which had been shot near Banbury on Oct. 30th.

GOLDEN-CRESTED WREN.—Rather numerous in the late autumn of 1889. I noticed some at Bloxham, Wickham, and Broughton on Nov. 1st, 8th, and 10th, and Mr. Wyatt received several for preservation about the end of that month and the beginning of December.

NUTHATCH.—Mr. Lambert informs me that in 1889 a pair began a nest in a hole in a wall, four or five feet from the ground, in the much-frequented road leading past Wadham College. The old elms here, and the trees in the gardens of St. John's, Trinity, and Wadham Colleges support many Nuthatches. A pair nested in the spring of 1888 and 1889 in a hole in a wall, just under the thatch coping, in a garden at Bloxham. There is a row of filbert-bushes in front of this wall, and the owner tells me they have had no nuts since the Nuthatches took up their abode there, as the birds took them before they were ripe.

WHITE WAGTAIL.—A case of the interbreeding of this species with the Pied Wagtail is recorded in 'The Zoologist' for 1890, p. 376.

GREY WAGTAIL.—A full account of this bird breeding in Oxon will be found in the paper above referred to (Zool. 1890, p. 371). On April 27th of that year, Mr. Lambert saw three or four birds at Hampton Gay, in a spot admirably suited for a breeding-place—an old, untenanted mill, with rapid water among stones below the sluice-gate.

MEADOW PIPIT.—I observed a pair in the rocky railway cutting at Bloxham on May 6th, 1890. This is a very uncommon bird here in the breeding season.

SKY LARK.—On July 22nd, 1890, I saw, on a piece of grazed

clover in this parish, a flock of fifty or sixty Sky Larks. I thought they were merely collected on account of the abundance of some particular food there; but on rising they all went off together, and pitched in the middle of a big field of swedes, from which they rose once more altogether. This, in my experience, is a most unusual occurrence in July. At the beginning of the frost we had vast numbers of Sky Larks. I saw an exceptionally large flock on a barley-stubble with clover on Nov. 29th. An examination of the crops of some I shot showed that they had not touched the clover-stems or leaves, though I have heard it said that a flock will "graze it off like sheep." But by the latter part of December they had disappeared. They entirely left a favourite farm at Bloxham, and during a long walk in Bodicote and Adderbury parishes the only Larks we saw were half-a-dozen looking very much out of place on the river-bank.

WOOD LARK.—On Dec. 9th, 1890, I observed, on a stubble at Wickham, a flock of about twenty short-tailed Larks, which had, when on the wing, a soft cry, "lu-eee." I think they must have been of this species.

CHAFFINCH.—A very big flock on a stubble at Wickham, on November 23rd, 1889, apparently all females. Round a rick on December 20th, 1890, females outnumbered males by ten to one.

BRAMBLING.—Six were netted by some ricks at Bloxham on Dec. 19th and 20th, 1890; they are known here as "Mountain Finches." Mr. Wyatt had a few at the end of the month, and Mr. Darbey, of Oxford, also had a few.

HAWFINCH.—A nest containing young was found at Sarsden in June, 1890. Mr. Lambert has an egg taken near Ifley about 1883, and about that year saw two eggs taken from two separate nests near the same place.

GOLDFINCH. — Several pairs bred in and about Bloxham village in the summer of 1890.

SISKIN.—I saw a little party of five in some alders by the stream just below the village, on Nov. 29th, 1890. Mr. Fowler saw two Siskins in Christ Church Meadows on April 30th, 1890. The Earl of Winchelsea writes me word of a nest containing five eggs which he found on Headington Hill in May, 1873. The nest was satisfactorily identified. Lord Winchelsea has most kindly presented me with one of the eggs (the remainder being in

his collection), as he thought a memento of it should remain in the county in which the nest was found.

LESSER REDPOLL.—In Oxon seems to be confined, in the breeding season, to the Oxford Parks and immediate neighbourhood. I can only account for this by the fact that numbers of birches (favourite trees of the Redpoll) have been planted there; this being a scarce tree in Oxon, and according to Mr. Druce (*'Flora of Oxfordshire'*), a doubtful native. Mr. Fowler, writing to me on May 24th, 1889, says Redpolls "are abundant at 'Parson's Pleasure.'" Mr. Lambert has furnished me with the following list of nests seen by him in this locality:—1883, five eggs (this is the one mentioned in my work); 1885, May 27th, one egg; 1886, May 13th, five eggs; same year, May 6th, two eggs—two females were unfortunately shot that year; 1887, one nest with five young, and another newly built; a third which bore traces of having been used in the spring, was discovered in the autumn. Mr. Fowler saw a pair in the Oxford Parks in June, 1890. These birds were unusually numerous in North Oxon in the autumn of 1890—in consequence, probably, of the exceptionally large crop of alder seed. I saw six in a big alder at Bodicote Mill, on Oct. 19th. Mr. Fowler wrote from Oxford, on Nov. 26th, "Unusual numbers of Redpolls lately." On the 29th I saw a small flock at Bodicote Mill, and three and a "charm" of seven Goldfinches in the alders here at different times of the day on the 30th. On Dec. 3rd a Redpoll, shot somewhere near here, came into my hands, in the flesh—a rather large bird; and the next day I saw a little flock in alders near the railway station.

CROSSBILL.—The nest mentioned in my book (*Addenda*) as found at Iffley in 1888 was found in February, 1887, by "J. W. S.", who, in reply to my enquiries, communicated particulars to the *'Oxford Times.'* It was found about the 19th, in cold weather, in a clump of fir trees. It was placed on a branch near the trunk of the tree, and was formed of twigs of the tree it was built in, lined with hair and fibre and a kind of down. The eggs were three in number, and the bird, which was near the nest, seemed quite tame. It was of a "brick-red" colour. I am acquainted with the finder's full name.

HOODED CROW.—One was caught at Wickham Mill, near Bloxham, about the middle of February, 1889. At the end of January, that year, I heard of one which had been consorting with

Carrion Crows at Sibford for some weeks. A very small specimen (less than an ordinary Rook) was shot at Byfield—outside our borders, in Northamptonshire—at the end of December, 1890.

ROOK.—Of four dozen young birds shot at Bloxham Grove, May 14th, 1890, half had a portion of the lower mandible light-coloured, generally a spot near the base, one or two had the whole base light; one-quarter of them with some white feathers on the chin, and two or three with white chins; one of these last had also a large portion of the lower mandible pinkish white, one primary and one primary-covert in the near wing pure white, three claws on one foot and one on the other pure white, one toe-joint and parts of others, especially the under side, dirty white.

SWALLOW.—One was seen over the Isis at the Gut, Iffley, on March 29th, 1890, by Mr. Joe Wilson, of Mill Hill, Iffley. He never saw one before April 9th in previous years ('Oxford Times').

SAND MARTIN.—Mr. Melliar Foster Melliar, of North Aston Hall, informs me that ever since he has lived there Sand Martins have nested in the kitchen-garden wall; this is for a period of about thirty years. A few years ago they used to breed in an old stone wall in the village of Adderbury; and Mr. J. R. Earle found a nest in a hole between the bricks underneath a bridge of the London and North-Western Railway at Oxford (Zool. 1884, p. 71). There is, or was, a large colony in a cutting of the railway near Littlemore. I saw the birds swarming there in May, 1880.

SWIFT.—On Aug. 22nd, 1890, I counted eleven Swifts in the air over the buildings of All Saints School, Bloxham, where they have a breeding colony; others were screaming round the church at the other end of the village. They have often entirely left us a week earlier.

NIGHTJAR.—The Rev. Murray A. Mathew writes me word that when he was at Oxford the Nightjar was common in Stow Wood, where he saw it every evening when he visited the wood to collect moths. I purchased from Mr. Wyatt the fresh skin of a bird in first dress—hardly full-feathered indeed—which was shot while flying round an oak tree at Epwell on Sept. 8th, 1889.

CUCKOO.—A good example of the red phase, a young bird, was killed near Banbury in the second week in August, 1889. Upper parts warm rufous, rather light, narrowly barred with brown, and some feathers tipped with dirty white. Under parts tinged with buff, and under tail-coverts warm buff. No part of

the under surface was of the ordinary white or greyish ground-colour.

HOOPOE.—The Rev. C. W. M. Bartholomew, Rector of Glympton, wrote me word as follows:—"As to the Hoopoe, my little boy of ten came to me and described a bird he had seen in Glympton Park last April [1889]; he had seen it go in and out of a round hole (made probably by a Green Woodpecker). His description of the markings, crest, and pink colour made me guess what it was. I went up with him to the deer park, and we watched, but in vain . . . I have no doubt it was"—a Hoopoe.

KINGFISHER.—Mr. Darbey had sixteen in his workshop in course of preservation, in the first week of December, 1890. On the 22nd of the same month Mr. Wyatt told me he had received eleven lately. I was informed, on good authority, that a man who had been for a walk with his gun along the Cherwell near Banbury, in the early part of the frost of 1890-91, returned with sixteen Kingfishers in his pockets.

GREEN WOODPECKER.—Two were picked up dead at the end of December, 1890. Like those found in the winter of 1880-81 (especially January), they had their tongues stretched out to their full length.

GREATER SPOTTED WOODPECKER.—A female bird was shot at Broughton on Feb. 15th, 1889, and another of the same sex at Finmere about the same time. One was seen by a friend of Mr. Lambert at Marston on Dec. 15th, 1889. One morning the Rev. M. A. Mathew met a boy just outside Christ Church, in St. Aldate's, carrying a fine live male in a cage; it was just caught, and, he presumed, on the nest. An adult male was unfortunately shot in a row of pollard willows at Banbury on May 27th, 1890. It had evidently been sitting on eggs. Another male was shot at Bodicote early in December, 1890.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER.—One was seen in Trinity College Gardens on March 13th, 1890 (Mr. W. G. Reeve *in litt.*). A nest, from which the young had just emerged, was found by Mr. Lambert in a hole in a small partly-decayed branch of a tree near Old Marston on June 15th, 1890.

WRYNECK.—The present rarity of this bird is remarkable. One which Mr. Lambert saw in the Parks at Oxford on Sept. 12th, 1886, was the only one he had met with there down to the close of 1889. I heard one of these birds at Bloxham about 6 a.m. on

April 15th, 1889. I heard the note of this bird in the trees near the Banbury Cemetery on April 29th, 1890. A Wryneck was very noisy in the trees in College Close, Bloxham, on May 8th, in the same year, and the next day I watched him through the glasses flitting and creeping about the rugged trunks and branches of some old ash trees. Mr. Lambert saw two near Horsepath on May 1st, 1890.

STOCK DOVE.—The Rev. J. E. Kelsall observed a pair, apparently breeding, in the large quadrangle of Baliol College; they were under the trees in the early morning at various times from March to June, 1884 and 1885 (*in litt.*). The Stock Dove is now (1891) a common bird in and about Oxford, Magdalen Grove, St. John's and Trinity Gardens, Christ Church Meadow, &c., and is sometimes wonderfully tame.

SAND GROUSE.—'The Field' for Oct. 19th, 1889, contains a report of three seen on the 15th on the high sandy railway bank between Reading and Twyford. This part of the line is in Berkshire, but only a short distance over our borders.

SPOTTED CRAKE.—Mr. Lambert bought one in the Oxford Market on Oct. 9th, 1889. A good example of the adult was picked up dead under the telegraph-wires near Banbury on Sept. 1st, 1889. A bird of the year was killed at the same place in the middle of the month.

WATER RAIL.—A young unmoulted bird, in plumage not often seen—here at least—hit the telegraph-wires, and was picked up near Bloxham, close to the house which used to be the 'Green Dragon,' on the Banbury road, on Oct. 7th, 1889.

MOORHEN.—An albino Moorhen, caught on the lake at Sarsden, was sent to the Zoological Gardens about the year 1887. In 1889 either one or two others were seen.

RINGED PLOVER.—Mr. Lambert saw one on Port Meadow on April 22nd, 1890. It was gone the next day.

GREY PHALAROPE.—One was caught on the canal just above Banbury on Oct. 8th, 1889. It was swimming on the canal, and was driven to the bank with a pole. Another was shot on the Sorbrook at Wickham Mill, near Bloxham, on the 12th. Both these birds were changing into winter dress. Mr. Darbey had two more in the same month, which were shot on the Isis near Culham.

WOODCOCK.—A little bright red bird, with rump and upper

tail-coverts plain, unbarred, bright rufous, was picked up close to Banbury at the end of December, 1890.

SNIFE.—Mr. Lambert flushed one in long grass — ankle-deep in water in places—on Otmoor, near Beckley, on May 5th, 1889. The bird went away, and I do not think would be breeding. This is the only note I have of the Snipe in Oxfordshire in May, and I have none for June. In the "Shooting (Moor and Marsh)" volume of the Badminton Library, particulars are given of the heavy bags made at Blenheim, in the upper, marshy end of the lake, when the water is low. In Bewick's 'British Birds' (1821, vol. ii. p. 77, note), it is stated that Mr. Tunstall mentions a very curious pied Snipe, shot in Botley Meadow, near Oxford, by a Mr. Court on Sept. 8th, 1789. I do not know where Tunstall's original record is; I do not find it among his notes in Fox's 'Synopsis of the Newcastle Museum.'

DUNLIN.—Two were seen on Port Meadow on Oct. 2nd, 1889, by Mr. Lambert. One, in winter dress, was shot from a bunch of five from a wet ditch in the "marshes" at Banbury on Nov. 29th, 1890, and came into my possession. Mr. Lambert saw about fifteen on Port Meadow on April 22nd, 1890; they wanted the black breast. They were probably immature birds.

LITTLE STINT.—Mr. Lambert saw on Port Meadow on Oct. 2nd, 1889, two birds which, from his description, must have been either Little or Temminck's Stints. They were flying with two Dunlins, which they resembled in shape, but were of the size of a Sparrow.

COMMON SANDPIPER.—I observed one on the banks of the Cherwell at Bodicote on April 20th, 1889; this is the earliest date at which I have ever met with it. Mr. W. G. Reeve, of Trinity College, wrote me word on June 8th, 1890, that a pair had "been living for upwards of a month on the shingly banks of the river between Sandford and Nuneham." Mr. Lambert saw them on Port Meadow as early as April 21st, 1890.

GREENSHANK.—A Greenshank was shot in the Cherwell, opposite Bodicote, on Aug. 14th, 1890, and was brought, in the flesh, to me the same day. In company with another, it frequented the "scours" in the river (which was rather low) since the 10th. The same day I went with the man who shot the bird to look for the other, but we could not find it; I saw four Common Sandpipers, very tame, and I think birds of the year.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT.—Between 1 and 2 a.m. on Aug. 1st, 1889, I heard the call-notes of waders, and on hurrying to the window, recognised at once the well-known "lou-ee, lou-ee" of this species. The birds were passing S.W., the direction taken by so many birds which pass over this district in autumn, and must have been flying low, as their notes were very loud and distinct. Air quite still, stars shining, but a little obscured by mist.

CURLEW.—One was shot at Sibford, and sent to Mr. Wyatt on Jan. 26th, 1889.

BLACK TERN.—Mr. W. Salter, of Summerfield, near Oxford, records observing one flying with Swifts over Port Meadow on June 6th, 1889 ('Field,' June 15th, 1889). Four birds, from the description given, evidently of this species, were reported to Mr. Fowler as seen on the Isis at King's Weir, between seven and eight in the evening of May 25th, 1890.

COMMON TERN.—Mr. Darbey had several, shot on the river at Oxford, in Sept. 1889, as he almost always has at that season. One shot near Kennington Island on Oct. 17th, 1890, is recorded in the 'Oxford Times.' I have examined recently an adult shot at North Aston Mill in either October or November, 1889.

GULLS.—A Common Gull, in immature dress, was shot close to Banbury on Dec. 3rd, 1889. A Kittiwake was killed with a stone from a flock of half-a-dozen at Ferry Hinksey (on the borders near Oxford), on Oct. 24th, 1885, and came into Mr. Lambert's possession. He tells me that a Black-headed Gull was seen at Port Meadow on July 1st, 1888. A specimen of the Little Gull was shot at Sandford, on the Isis, on Oct. 17th, 1890, and preserved by Mr. Darbey. I did not see the bird, but Mr. Darbey was quite sure of it, and told me that it was like a Black-headed Gull in winter dress which was before us as we talked, but did not look half the size, and measured only about ten inches in total length, he should say. A Black-headed Gull was shot at North Newington, about Dec. 8th, 1889. It had a rather dark head, and was approaching adult plumage, as there was one pure white unbarred feather in the tail. An adult Kittiwake was shot at Tadmarton on or about Jan. 30th, 1890. On April 24th I saw three Herring Gulls, apparently adult, flying over Bodicote low down, between 6 and 7 p.m. They were going exactly N.E., wind then N.N.W., very light. Two Gulls were

seen about mid-day, wheeling over Bloxham, by a late friend of mine. Another friend saw a Gull pass over the village, going N.E., on the 10th. A Black-headed Gull was seen by Mr. Lambert on Port Meadow on April 22nd and 23rd, 1890. Many Common Gulls were obtained in March, 1890. Mr. Darbey received upwards of a dozen for preservation from Radley, Lechlade, Wolvercote, Steeple Aston, &c. Some were in an exhausted condition; one was caught by a child, and another was picked up dead. On the 22nd the recorder saw one flying over Port Meadow (F. W. Lambert, in 'Oxford Times'). The Rev. W. Croke Robinson, of Kensington, has kindly written me word that in the early spring of (about) the year 1853, when living in his father's rectory at Stonesfield, he saw four or five large birds fly over the bottom of the garden. One of them was shot by a labourer named Townsend, who brought it to the Rectory. They had a professional opinion upon it, and it turned out to be a Glaucous Gull. I have no other record of this species in Oxfordshire, and am glad to add it to the list of rare visitors to the county.

POMATORHINE SKUA.—An example, in immature dress, was caught alive at Finmere at the end of December, 1890.

FORK-TAILED PETREL.—An example, which I have examined, was picked up dead at Chadlington early in December, 1890.

STORM PETREL.—Mr. Wyatt had a nice adult bird, now in Mr. F. C. Aplin's possession, which was captured on the canal a mile or two above Banbury, on Oct. 28th, 1889. One shot on the Isis near Kennington Island on Oct. 17th 1890, by Mr. J. W. Mountain, is recorded in the 'Oxford Times.' "H. J. B." recorded in the 'Oxford Times' that on Nov. 23rd, 1890, he saw a flock of seven or eight of these birds over the river Ray in Otmoor, near Islip. I am acquainted with the recorder's name.

PUFFIN.—A bird in its first autumn was caught alive at Chipping Norton on Oct. 26th, 1889, and was seen by me some time afterwards.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER.—A male in immature plumage was shot in the Cherwell near North Aston Mill during severe frost in 1864, by Mr. Foster Melliar, in whose possession it now is.

RED-THROATED DIVER.—An example, intermediate between the immature and adult winter dress, was caught alive close to Banbury on Dec. 11th, 1890. Through the kindness of its owner, I was able to see it the same day. It took a sprat out of a basin

of water, but dropped it; later it ate two which were put into its basket with it.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE.—One was shot on Otmoor in January, 1889, and taken to Mr. Darbey, of Oxford. Mr. Fowler and I visited Clattercote Reservoir on June 24th, 1890, and saw one pair which had apparently lost their young, and another old bird, whose mate was probably sitting.

ECLAUVONIAN GREBE.—One was killed at Hook Norton at the end of December, 1890. I saw it a few days later.

BITTERN.—One was shot near Bletchington about Dec. 25th, 1890. A good many Bitterns were recorded in 'The Field' about this time from various parts of the country.

WILD GEESE.—Mr. Foster Melliar saw, as he believes, seven Wild Geese flying low over North Aston Hall on a foggy evening at dusk on Nov. 23rd, 1889. On the evening of Sept. 21st, 1889, I am informed that a considerable flock of Geese were seen flying over Banbury about 7 p.m. They passed from north to south, wheeling round once or twice before going on. George Brown, of Bodicote, a good wild-fowler, saw the Geese about 9 p.m. They came from the Cherwell Valley, and pitched on a wheat-stubble in Bodicote parish; when put up they went to another stubble, and yet another, and then probably went on, for when Brown (who had no gun that night) went out at daylight the next morning he could not find them. More Geese were seen over Banbury on the 23rd, about 8 p.m. They seemed bewildered with the lights, and remained for some minutes flying round just above the roofs of the houses. People who saw and heard them said the calls resembled those of domestic geese somewhat. Mr. Wyatt saw half-a-dozen Grey Geese in the valley at Williamscoate on Nov. 6th or 7th, 1889. A White-fronted Goose in nearly, if not quite, adult dress, was shot at North Aston Mill, with another, out of a skein of twenty, on or about Dec. 14th, 1890. Mr. Wyatt heard of Wild Geese in the Cherwell Valley near Croperdy, in the second week in December. Three were shot in the valley at Twyford, near Adderbury, in the third week in December, and about the same time the shooter saw "gaggles" or "skeins" of thirty-seven, seven and three. Those shot were unfortunately plucked before I saw them, but from the colours, as described to me, the dark slate-coloured "nail," yellow legs, and absence of white on the face, there is no doubt that they were Bean Geese.

Mr. S. Sargeant, of Handborough, records in the 'Oxford Times' that he saw four Wild Geese feeding on the banks of the Evenlode near there, on Dec. 10th, 1890. On the 25th half-a-dozen were seen at Mill Bridge, near Adderbury, by a man named Brown, who is well acquainted with wildfowl. During my absence from home some Geese frequented this parish, between here and Barford. On the 26th, twenty-four were seen on some young wheat (snow-covered); the next day they flew over a friend's head, quite low down, when he had no gun; and on the 31st they were round a waggon-load of pea-haulm standing in a field, running about, said my informant, "like a lot of turkeys."

BRENT GOOSE.—There is a specimen (with a medium-coloured belly) in the Oxford Museum, labelled "Kennington, Oxon, 1830. C. Webb, Esq." It is in such a position that the label can only be read by almost lying down on the floor, and I overlooked it until after the 'Birds of Oxon' was published.

SHELDRAKE.—One was seen on the Isis by Port Meadow, on Oct. 8th, 1889, by Mr. Lambert (Zool. 1889, p. 453). I have recently examined a specimen of the adult which was shot on the Cherwell at North Aston Mill in the winter of 1889-90.

WILD DUCK.—A hybrid between the Pintail and Wild Duck was shot near Standlake about the second week in March, 1851, and was brought into Oxford Market with other fowl. It passed through Mr. Osman's hands into the possession of the recorder (Mr. A. M. Norman, Zool. 1851, p. 3175).

GADWALL.—The Rev. Murray A. Mathew writes:—"I still possess a Gadwall which was purchased in Oxford Market. It was lent (stuffed) as a model to the artist decorating the walls of the new debating room at the Union." In a later letter he says:—"At the time (and ever since have) I considered it a local specimen; for, as you correctly state, no foreign wild ducks were at that period sold at Oxford Market, and wildfowl of any kind were rarely to be seen on sale. Immature Golden-eyes, Pochards, and Wigeon, all of them known to town-gunners as 'currees,' were not uncommon in my time on the Thames (or rather Isis), especially along Port Meadow and above Godstow, and one or two of them would sometimes be seen in the market."

SHOVELLER.—A duck was shot from a party of four on the river at Iffley, on Nov. 12th, 1889, and was taken to Mr. Darbey, as he informed Mr. Arthur H. Macpherson.

TEAL.—Two were seen by Mr. Lambert on the river adjoining Port Meadow on Sept. 19th, 1890.

GOLDEN-EYE.—Mr. Sargent records, in the 'Oxford Times,' that he shot one on Dec. 10th, 1890, on the Evenlode between Handborough Mill and Eynsham. Mr. Darbey informs me that he had two or three more during the winter; and a duck recorded, in the 'Oxford Times,' as a Buffle-head, shot near Ditchley early in December, was, I believe, from the description I had of it, nothing more than a female Golden-eye. I think one of the above-named birds was possibly a Scaup, but I have not seen it.

COMMON SCOTER.—A beautiful old drake, in fine plumage, was shot on the moat at Broughton Castle on Oct. 23rd, 1890. Another fine drake, shot at Weirs Mill, between Ifley and Folly Bridge on Dec. 12th, is recorded in the 'Oxford Times.'

WINTER NOTES FROM SWITZERLAND AND NORTH ITALY.

BY A. HOLTE MACPHERSON, B.C.L., M.A., F.Z.S.

IN November last I started for a few weeks' holiday, which, after a few days' rest at Lucerne, I spent in North Italy. Being alone and ignorant of Italian, I took an ordinary circular ticket; and the following notes from my diary, though comprising nothing particularly new, may perhaps be of interest in so far as they indicate some of the birds which may be met with by an observer who remains entirely on the beaten track of tourists.

On Nov. 14th I arrived at Lucerne, and found the Coots on the lake as numerous as ever; there were also a good many Little Grebes, and some Black-headed Gulls, one of which—perhaps an old bird—still retained an almost complete dark hood. Towards sunset several flocks of Wild Duck were seen flying to the south, but were too far off for identification. A long stream of Alpine Choughs, *Pyrrhocorax alpinus*, also passed across the lake; they were at a great height, but in the stillness of the evening their curious cry—like a cork being screwed out of a bottle—was distinctly audible. At first I thought this might be a movement of a migratory nature, but as I saw some a few evenings later at the same hour, probably they were merely returning from their feeding grounds, just as Rooks do.

Nov. 15th. A drake Tufted Duck was diving close to the shore, and during an afternoon walk I saw three Buzzards, some Ring Ouzels, and a number of Coal Tits, Nuthatches, and Crows.

Nov. 16th. A fine day. Set out for an expedition up the Rigi (5675 ft.), accompanied by the Rev. W. Marriner, who was staying at Lucerne. The first bird observed on commencing the ascent above Vitznau was a fine grey-backed Marsh Tit, *P. borealis*, but as we mounted higher the absence of the Tits and Goldcrests, which swarm on these hill-sides in summer, became very noticeable. After rising about a thousand feet, we found a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker; and shortly afterward I suddenly came upon a species I had long wished to see—the Three-toed Woodpecker, *Picoides tridactylus*, hammering away loudly on the trunk of a tree. The yellow crown was not very conspicuous, and it was apparently a young male bird. Only that morning M. Stauffer, the naturalist at Lucerne, had shown me a fine series of skins of this species, all obtained in the neighbourhood, where it is evidently fairly abundant, though during a previous visit to Lucerne, in July, 1886, I was unable to find it. On resuming our upward journey nothing more of interest appeared till we were at a height of about 4000 ft., when, just as we reached the thin coating of snow which covered the upper portion of the hill, a flock of Snow Finches, *Montifringilla nivalis*, flew by, twittering loudly, and showing a good deal of white in the bright sunshine. On reaching our destination we had a short rest, in order to have some lunch and enjoy the view, which was most beautiful, and then commence the descent. It was now afternoon, and the side of the hill up which we had come was enjoying the full benefit of the sun, and birds were far more numerous. There were numbers of Great Tits, Crows, Jays, Nuthatches, and Green Woodpeckers (*Gecinus viridis*, we did not see *canus*). When we reached the level of the fruit trees (about 1000 ft.) we unexpectedly came upon a Nutcracker, *Nucifraga caryocatactes*, busily engaged in a cherry tree; this bird allowed us to have a splendid view of it before it flew off, and in a few minutes we found several more. One was hammering on the bough of a cherry tree, just like a Nuthatch, throwing the whole weight of its body into each blow. On my approach it retired, and I climbed into the tree to see what it had been trying to break, but found nothing. A glorious sunset was

the only further thing of interest which we saw in our homeward journey.

Nov. 17th. Walked to the neighbouring lake of Zug, and saw a Dipper, *Cinclus albicollis*, which appeared extraordinarily pale, the head being almost fawn-coloured. There were numbers of Magpies and Jays about. In the evening some more Choughs flew across the Lake of Lucerne in the same direction and at about the same hour as the flock seen on the 14th.

Nov. 18th. Left Lucerne for Milan.

Nov. 19th. At Milan all the Sparrows had changed, *Passer italiae* taking the place of *P. domesticus*. The males of the former species, in their winter dress, bear a close resemblance to our bird, for the feathers on the chocolate crown are then edged with grey. The poulterers' shops contained a number of small birds, chiefly Larks, Yellowhammers, Robins, and Sparrows, with a few Landrail, Mallard, Teal, and Wigeon. In the Museum there are a good many groups of Lombardy species, with nests and eggs, including the Great Reed Warbler, Lesser Grey Shrike, Woodchat, Little Bittern, and Scops Owl.

On Nov. 20th I went to the shop of the chief naturalist in the town, and saw two Italian Sparrows, one of which had the whole of that portion of the breast and throat which is normally black of a fine bright chestnut, and the second bird also had a certain amount of the same colour on the chest. A corresponding variation is not uncommonly exhibited by our English Sparrow, but I have only once seen it as pronounced as in the case of the first of these Milanese specimens, and that was last year in a bird on the railings in front of Lancaster Gate in the Bayswater Road. *Passer domesticus* was unknown to the naturalist here; and with the exception of a doubtful bird at Venice, which I could not with certainty identify, all the Sparrows I saw in Italy belonged to the Italian form. At Nice on the west and Trieste on the east, its place is said to be taken by *P. domesticus* (see Giglioli, 'Avifauna Italica,' p. 26), while the Alps form a good natural boundary on the north, and I believe it has rarely been observed further in that direction than the Brenner Pass. In the summer of 1886, however, I found both forms at Schuls; and this place, though actually a few miles south-west of the Brenner, may be considered as geographically further north, for it is situated at the upper end of the Valley of the Inn which flows northwards into the plain of

Innsbrück; so that the bird at this point has passed the summit of the barrier. Left Milan for Verona.

Nov. 21st. In the picturesque market-place of Verona there were many stalls covered with birds, chiefly Sparrows, Chaffinches, Bramblings, Robins, Fieldfares, Blackbirds, and many Hawfinches—fine bright birds. One man was selling live stock—Serins, Siskins, and Little Owls (*Athene noctua*). The latter are much used by the Italian birdcatchers, who place them in a conspicuous position, in order to attract the small birds, which come in crowds to mob them. This use of Owls by fowlers is evidently very ancient, for it is mentioned by Aristotle ('History of Animals,' Book IX. chap. ii.). There is also a Museum at Verona, which contains a gallery with "Avifauna Veronese" written up over the doorway. The collection consists of about four hundred specimens, including some American forms (e. g. *Turdus migratorius*, *Ectopistes migratorius*, and *Tringa macularia*), but unfortunately none of the specimens have labels attached. I noticed some Starlings in the town, but saw absolutely nothing during a walk along the banks of the Adige, and in the evening left for Venice.

Nov. 22nd. On my way to church I saw from my gondola a few Herring Gulls, *Larus cacchinans*, feeding at the mouth of the Grand Canal, and showing their yellow legs very distinctly as they hovered for food over the surface of the water. *L. ridibundus* was also there in fairly large numbers.

On Nov. 23rd saw what I believe to have been a cock Sparrow, *P. domesticus*, but could not be sure, as the bird was soaked. Rained hard all day. On the 24th left Venice for Bologna, and on the 26th moved on to Florence.

From Nov. 27th to Dec. 17th I remained at or in the vicinity of Florence. The country here is so laid out in olive-yards and vine-yards, and the roads have mostly such high walls on both sides, that to observe birds was generally quite impossible. Even when you found a clear spot the birds were very difficult to approach, and there were very few of them; they are shot at and trapped on all sides, and are consequently very wary, observing you long before you observed them. There is a fine market in Florence, and during my daily visits I picked up one or two specimens for skinning—e. g., *Lanius excubitor*, *Sylvia melanocephala*, *Acredula Irbyi*, *Serinus hortulanus*, *Melanocorypha calandra*, and *Cinclus albicollis*. The birds seen in this market would make a

long list, and included the Blackcap, Wryneck, Greater Spotted Woodpecker, White Wagtail, Wood Lark, Cirl and Meadow Buntings, Dotterel, Dunlin, Ring Ouzels, Little Bustard, and many others.

On Nov. 29th a Blackcap was singing in a public garden in Florence. It need hardly be said that the specimens in the market with chocolate heads were, from their size, apparently all females. On Dec. 10th, while skinning *Acredula Irbyi*—the only specimen of this form which I obtained—in a garden near Florence, I heard a Warbler trying to sing in a thick shrub close by. The song was not unlike that of a Garden Warbler, but it was more intermittent, and the bird was singing in a half-hearted manner. After some trouble I managed to get a good look at the singer, who proved to be the Sardinian Warbler, *S. melanocephala*, a most beautiful bird, with his coal-black head and pure white throat; but the most noticeable point about him was his bright salmon-coloured eyelids, which showed out much more clearly in the live bird than in either of the specimens I obtained in the market. This species was very common in the neighbourhood, and always betrayed its presence by a very loud and resonant “chat, chat.” I was somewhat surprised at hearing the song in December, but apparently it is not unusual, for Dresser, in his ‘Birds of Europe,’ quoting Irby, says, “its song is to be heard at all seasons.” It is worth mentioning that there were many male birds in the market, but only one female, and she was too far advanced to skin; she showed the same brightly-coloured eyelids as the male bird. On my first visit to the market I found a curious variety of the Calandra Lark with white secondaries: this bird, lying on a heap of others, made me for a moment think I had got hold of a White-winged Lark—which is nearly as great a rarity in Italy as here.

A Dipper from the market, which came from the Appenines, was a fairly typical *Cinclus albicollis*. *C. aquaticus* and *melanogaster* also occur in Italy, but are rare. Except in the colouring of the upper parts, my Florence bird does not differ materially from two Norfolk specimens in my collection, though the red on the belly is much less bright than in a bird from Devon, but rather brighter than one labelled “Silesia.”

Through the kindness of Prof. Giglioli, I was able to spend some very pleasant afternoons in the Museum at Florence

examining the splendid series of Italian birds which he has set up, and which is by far the best collection of the kind in the country.

As to the live birds in the various dealers' shops, they were mostly Siskins, Serins, and Sparrows, but there were also a good many Bullfinches, Goldfinches, Tree Sparrows, and Linnets. Before starting for England I procured two Blue Thrushes, *M. cyanus*, and a fine male *Passer italiae*, which latter has remained throughout the winter in full summer plumage. The journey home through Mt. Cenis was terribly cold, and the Thrushes would probably not have survived had they not been dosed with Marsala in the middle of the night. Luckily they eventually arrived alive, although one succumbed shortly afterwards to the London fog at Christmas.

The winter is not a good time for birds in Italy, and even waders and ducks were almost entirely absent from the markets and shops; but these rough notes, which are mostly copied from my journal, may serve to give some idea of the species to be seen by the ordinary sight-seer at that season.

In all, I either saw alive or handled in the flesh nearly a hundred species, including about a dozen which I would not have come across in England.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

MAMMALIA.

Deer in Snowdrifts.—To give some idea of the depth of snow and drift in the north of Scotland last winter, in the parish of Lairg, a month or two after the first thaw set in, two full-grown Stags were found dead in a hollow in one of the burns there, being smothered by the drifting snow. The first thing one of the keepers saw was the Stag's antlers above the snow, which he took at first for the branch of a tree; but when he went near he found that it was a Stag that had been smothered standing on his feet. A week or so after this, when more of the snow was melted, the other Stag was found; but this one had been smothered while lying down. He was close beside his comrade.

Marten in Co. Wexford.—I write to record the capture, on May 1st, at Coolbawn, Co. Wexford, by my friend Mr. Arthur Rutledge, of a young

Marten, which now—presented by its captor—is an inmate of the Dublin Zoological Gardens. It is the only Marten at present in the Gardens, specimens of this animal being now difficult to procure. What adds to the interest of this capture is the fact that Wexford was not hitherto one of the Irish counties in which the Marten was known with certainty to survive; and though the beautiful woods of Coolbawn, lying near the mountain frontier of the western side of the county, afford protection to a number of wild creatures more or less uncommon in open districts throughout Ireland, such as the Jay and the Squirrel, no suspicion of the presence of Martens in that neighbourhood had been in any way aroused until the moment when the animal itself was found, taken—as Mr. Rutledge informs me—in a trap set for rabbits, in a rabbit-hole in a fence bounding some tillage, and about a hundred yards from the plantation. The Marten, when it reveals its presence at all, generally does so by its depredations among poultry, young lambs, &c. There having been no suspicion of its proximity in the present instance shows how easily this wary nocturnal creature may escape detection in any part of the country sufficiently wild to afford it concealment. I have no doubt that other Martens survive at Coolbawn, and elsewhere in the county.—C. B. MOFFAT (36, Hardwicke Street, Dublin).

Earliest use of Foxhounds.—In 'Country Contentments,' by "G. M." [Gervase Markham], 1615 [1st ed. 1611], the writer gives a description of the Hound best suited for hunting the Fox and Badger, which is interesting as showing that at this date it was no longer the universal habit to hunt the fox with all kinds of dogs indiscriminately. This seems to be about the earliest indication of the recognition of a Foxhound, as distinguished from the varieties of hound used for chasing other game. Harrison, who wrote his description of England about 1577–87 A.D., merely classes together, under the name of Harriers, all the hounds used for hunting "the fox, the hare, the wolf (if we had any), hart, buck, badger, otter, polecat, lopstart, weasel, conie, etc.," but he does not mention the breeds used for any of these various forms of sport.—A. HOLTE MACPHERSON (51, Gloucester Place, Hyde Park).

[The *lopstart*, or *lobster*, is a provincial name for the Stoat. As to the origin of the name, see Zool. 1884, pp. 112, 153, and 1888, pp. 20, 65.—ED.]

Polecat in Pembrokeshire.—From all I can learn from trustworthy sources, the Polecat is now extinct in this county. It never was common here. The last was killed in a large wood called Penkelly Wood, about fifteen years ago. I learn also, from the descendant of an old sporting family in Cardiganshire, that it was the invariable rule of all masters of Foxhounds never to whip them off a Marten Cat, which they hunted as eagerly as a Fox. This agrees with my experience of the Marten killed

with Foxhounds in Carmarthenshire, and already referred to by me.—
E. CAMBRIDGE PHILLIPS (Brecon, S. Wales).

White and Pied Stoats.—I have seen albino Stoats, but never a true white one. Piebald Stoats are, however, not very uncommon. Years ago my brother had a remarkably large piebald buck Stoat that was killed in a rat-trap in our house, in the Co. Dublin. About the same time a smaller one was caught in a trap set in a rabbit-run. I shot a piebald Stoat at Portraine, Co. Dublin, and I saw a very white one chasing a rabbit in Coole Park, Co. Galway. Others that I have seen were in the Burren, Co. Clare, and in the crags of Galway, Mayo, &c. In general, when you see anything of the kind you have not got a gun, and anyone who has tried to catch a Stoat in an old wall knows what a task he has. Years ago, near the N.E. end of Lough Graney, Co. Clare, there was a farmer who used regularly to feed the Stoats, as he said if he gave them their meal of milk they never went near the hen-roosts. Besides, he said that they kept strangers away, and that the bucks used to get as "white as snow in the winter." This latter assertion, however, I will not vouch for, as I have often heard of a hare "as white as snow" that did not answer my expectations when I shot it. In my boyish days a Stoat-skin purse, or, as they were nearly universally called in Ireland, "a Weasel-skin" purse, was considered lucky, while a piebald Weasel-skin purse was the height of luck. I had, and perhaps have still, a piebald Marten-skin, the Marten having been killed in the wood, near Castle Kirke, Lough Corrib.—G. H. KINAHAN, in 'Land and Water.'

CETACEA.

Delphinus tursio in the Colne.—On the morning of May 29th last, a man named John Crosby was walking by the side of Mill Creek, Fingringhoe, when he discovered some large Porpoises in a shallow part of the creek, unable to pass downwards, in consequence of the receding tide leaving too little water on a bank below. With the help of some of his friends, whom he had called to his assistance, a slip-noose of rope was passed over each, and they were drawn on to the marsh, and dispatched by cutting their throats, pig-fashion. I saw them in the afternoon, and found them to be two male and one female "Bottle-noses," *Delphinus tursio*, a Dolphin not rare in our estuaries. The female measured 10 ft. 3 in., the largest male 10 ft. 1 in., and the lesser 5 ft. 10 in., from the tip of the nose to the notch in fluke, respectively.—HENRY LAVER (Colchester).

BIRDS.

Variety of *Grus cinerea* in Spain.—About the end of April last I heard from Seville that the Comte de Paris had shot a white Crane in the Marishills below Seville; and as my informant had not seen the bird, and

could only give me a hazy description of it, I took the liberty of writing at once to H.R. Highness (with whom I had previously had certain ornithological correspondence) to ask for particulars of this occurrence. The Comte replied to my enquiries most promptly and obligingly, informing me that this Crane had for two months been keeping company with a large flock of its own species; but when the others left the district, on the northward migration in March, this white one remained alone, and H.R.H.—being anxious to secure it for preservation—stalked behind a horse to within forty yards, and shot it, on April 5th ult. I received the skin for inspection on May 21st, and, as I believe that varieties of this species are by no means common, I append a full description kindly written out for me by Mr. J. Cullingford of Durham, to whom the Comte de Paris has entrusted the specimen for preservation. I am informed that it was a female.

"Description of skin of Crane, *Grus cinerea*, ♀, shot by H.R.H. the Comte de Paris, in the Coto del Rey, Andalucia, April 5th, 1892:—Hair-like feathers on head, brown; feathers below the occiput for three inches, grey; the malar region, throat, and portion of neck for ten inches, grey,—a broad white band from the eyes separating the grey of the occiput from that of the throat; the back of neck and the whole of the back and rump almost white, slightly tinged with grey; the longest feathers in the scapulars have the shafts towards the ends pale brown, the feathers on each side a little paler, shading into white; the tail-coverts are grey, of two shades; the base of tail almost white, and the terminal portion grey. The primaries dark brown; the secondaries pale brown, the innermost elongated feathers almost white, shading into brown; wing-coverts nearly white, excepting three or four feathers which have brown ends. The lower portion of neck and the whole of body white."—LILFORD.

Iceland Gull in Kinsale Harbour.—It may interest Mr. R. Warren, and possibly others of your readers, to know that I observed an immature specimen of the Iceland Gull, *Larus leucopterus*, in Kinsale Harbour, on May 15th, among some Herring Gulls.—H. LEYBORNE POPHAM (Yacht 'Merganser,' R. W. Y. C., Valentia).

Supposed occurrence of Ivory Gull in Co. Dublin.—The White Gull stated (p. 228) to have been seen on the Liffey, between Essex and Carlyle Bridges, on April 19th, was more likely, I think, to have been a specimen of the Iceland Gull, *Larus leucopterus*, than of the Ivory Gull, *L. eburneus*. It was probably a straggler from the flight of Iceland and Glaucous Gulls that visited our north-west coast last winter, of which several specimens of both species were obtained on the coast of Donegal, and of the Iceland Gull on the Sligo and Mayo coasts. The Ivory Gull is such a rare visitor to Ireland that only two specimens have been obtained that could be recorded with any certainty; one, mentioned by

Thompson as having been obtained by Mr. R. Chute, near Dingle, in Co Kerry, in February, 1846; and another, an adult bird, was sent from Bantry Bay, in the winter of 1852, to my old friend the late Dr. Harvey of Cork, and is now, I believe, in the Natural-History Collection of the Queen's College in that city. Several reasons may be given for inferring that the bird seen on the Liffey was an Iceland Gull; and the fact of its being so far from the sea, feeding in the company of the smaller Gulls, goes far to prove that it was an Iceland Gull; for this bird often associates with the smaller Gulls, accompanying them inland to rest in the fields, and feed after the plough, where I have shot specimens feeding on worms in the company of Blackheaded and Common Gulls. The immature Iceland Gull is often so pale in colour as to appear quite white when flying amongst other Gulls, and has before now been mistaken for the Ivory Gull. Again, it is stated that the bird seen, "many times flew, hovering and swooping so close to us that the dark base of the bill was very conspicuous." Now the immature Icelandier has the bill very dark,—quite as dark-coloured as that of a young Herring Gull, but as it approaches maturity the bill becomes lighter in colour; so probably the bird seen was in its third year, when the bill was beginning to clear. The bird, if an Ivory Gull, when it approached its observers so closely as to show the dark base of the bill, should have exhibited far more plainly its coal-black legs and feet, contrasting so strongly with the pure white of the under parts; indeed, the black legs and feet should have appeared more "conspicuous" than the base of the bill, and have attracted more attention, and it is strange how this escaped the notice of the observers if they were correct in their identification.—ROBERT WARREN (Moy View, Ballina, Co. Mayo).

White Partridges.—Whilst shooting at Bolnhurst, seven miles out of Bedford, on Oct. 3rd, 1890, my father shot a white Partridge; and again, on Oct. 15th, another white bird fell to his gun. Both birds belonged to the same covey, having been frequently seen together. On the wing they both appeared to be quite white, but on closer inspection the brown markings on the plumage were faintly traceable under the white, the birds having the appearance of having been washed over with a thin coating of white paint. The markings were stronger in the bird shot on Oct. 15th than in that shot on the 3rd. The legs of both were of a lighter colour than those of the ordinary brown bird, and the eyes were of a bright red colour. In size and other respects the birds were the same as their brown relatives. Both were preserved, and are now in my father's possession.—A. HASTED (Curragh Camp).

Birds observed on a Fishing Expedition to South Trondhjem.—At 9 p.m. on June 12th of last year I left Hull, by Wilson's line of steamers, for Christiana, in company with my brother, a friend and his wife, and

after a good passage and a beautiful sail up the Fjord to Christiana, arrived about noon on the 14th. We spent the evening and the next morning viewing the sights, the most interesting being the old Viking's ship and the Museum, and left by the mid-day express. In the refreshment-room at Roraas, about 2000 ft. above the sea, I noticed two stuffed specimens of Pallas's Sand Grouse, killed in the neighbourhood, I understood, in 1888; also Eagle Owl, Hawk Owl, and Tengmalm's Owl, White-tailed Eagle, and Dotterel. We arrived early on the 16th at Störren, about 390 ft., on the Gula river, and after breakfast in the comfortable inn, looking over the valley of the Gula and the charming grounds and station, all the buildings of which, as well as the hotel, were of wood, and bright with fresh paint and the brilliant sunshine, we started in carriages for our twenty miles' drive, the weather—as, with the exception of one day's rain and several heavy thunderstorms, it remained during my month's stay in Norway—being most beautiful. Our route, after a short distance by the side of the Gula, lay up the Valley of the Staavil River—a wild, rapid stream, which, like all Norwegian streams, brought down no end of timber during the season to the various saw mills on its banks—to the summit, not above the tree limit, however, at Biærkaker, about 2000 ft., and where there is a small lake. From here, having had our lunch, we commenced our descent by a steep zigzag road into the Valley of the Orkla, which we followed down to our fishing station, Grødt Meldalen, about 600 ft., and twenty miles or so from a branch of the Trondhjem Fjord, into which it flows. The Orkla above Grødt is a good-sized river flowing rapidly over a rocky bed, with deep pools, rapids, gravel beds, and here and there slight falls. The valley is a deep one, the more level parts cultivated, and studded with saw-mills and farm-houses. The hill-sides, very steep, were mown for hay, where not covered with wood—principally spruce and some pine, with birches and alder and a white poplar in the lower and damper ground. These woods in many places came down to the river. Above they gradually got thinner and merged into the usual Norwegian Fjeld. Below Grødt the river becomes less rapid, and the valley opens out considerably and is more cultivated. The portion of the river seen by us is above Grødt, so that I have no knowledge of the lower portion.

Fieldfares were nesting everywhere, after the manner of our Thrush or Blackbird, and not in colonies. Wheatear, not numerous, nesting in walls, &c., near the river-side. Whinchat, Redstart, and Redbreast, not numerous. Blackcap and Chiffchaff, fairly numerous. Willow Wren, numerous. Dipper (black-bellied). Marsh Titmouse and Great Titmouse, fairly numerous. Grey Wagtail, not common. White Wagtail, numerous. Pied Flycatcher, numerous, especially in the Valley of the Orkla, and nesting principally in the old nests of the Green Woodpecker in the straight stems of a white poplar; one nest was in one of the little boxes hung out by the natives on their houses

for birds to nest in. Swallows, uncommon. Martin, local and fairly numerous. Sand Martin, uncommon. House Sparrow, generally distributed. Chaffinch. Brambling, fairly numerous. Bullfinch, seen by my brother. Yellow Bunting, fairly numerous. Starling. Common Jay, seen by my brother. Magpie, common. Hooded Crow, with young, flying. Swift, a few pairs. Green Woodpecker, common, making the holes for their nest in the tall straight stem of the poplar mentioned above. Cuckoo, not common. Red-breasted Merganser, a few pairs by the river. Snipe, one near the summit at Biærkaker. Common Sandpiper, not numerous. Greenshank, heard at Biærkaker. Black-throated Diver, one pair on the lake at Biærkaker.

Additional birds noticed at Grüdtt were the Long-tailed Tit (the northern form, with a very white head), Coal Tit, Blue Tit (often nesting in the old nest of Woodpecker), Tree Pipit, Spotted Flycatcher (nesting in the crevices of rocks near the river), Siskin (fairly common), Tawny Owl, Rough-legged Buzzard (trapped higher up the Orkla), Merlin and Kestrel (not common), Mallard (one duck on the river), Capercaillie, Willow Grouse. I also found the nest of what I believe to be the Mealy Redpoll, but did not identify the bird.

This is not supposed to be anything like a complete list, my time having been much taken up with fishing, in which we had good sport. It is therefore only those birds which presented themselves to me that are recorded. The first part of the list includes the birds I saw during our drive over, the second to the additional ones seen at Grüdtt, with the exception of Bullfinch, Common Jay, Snipe, Greenshank, and Black-throated Diver.—F. P. JOHNSON (Castleheads, Brampton, Cumberland).

Variety of the King Duck.—I have recently received from Mr. Marsden, of Bath, a skin of a female King Duck, *Somateria spectabilis*, labelled "Iceland, 1885." On relaxing and mounting it, I find that in one wing the first *two*—and in the other wing the first *four*—primaries are white.—WM. FARREN (9, Union Road, Cambridge).

Golden Oriole in Richmond Park.—On April 25th, while riding in Richmond Park, my attention was attracted by the appearance of a yellow bird with dark wings and tail flying close to me. I presume it was a Golden Oriole. I do not think any of these birds have been seen about here before.—M. BURR (Richmond).

[The Golden Oriole, arriving in April, is an annual summer visitor, chiefly to the south-eastern and southern counties of England, and in many instances has been known to breed here. Doubtless this would happen oftener if the birds were not thoughtlessly shot on their arrival.—ED.]

Hoopoe in Surrey.—On June 26th, near the village of Oxted, I saw a strange bird flying over the road which I did not recognise. A friend

who was walking with me instantly identified it as a Hoopoe, a species which he had often seen and shot in South Africa.—M. BURR (Hazelwood, Limpsfield, Surrey).

Supplementary Notes on the Birds of Donegal.—Mr. G. H. Eastwood, of Godalming, Surrey, has kindly sent me the following notes, which were taken by him while staying at Bundoran from July to September, 1891. Lough Melvin is just outside the southern edge of the county :—

Sedge Warbler. Abundant along the Bundrowes river.

Kingfisher. Saw several of these birds along the Bundrowes. A specimen in perfect plumage was drowned in one of the eel-nets on Aug. 19th.

Curlew. According to William Despard, Lord Massy's bailiff at Lareen, Curlews breed on a small island at Lough Melvin.

Black Tern, *Hydrochelidon nigra*. "About Aug. 7th, as I was walking along the shore of Lough Melvin, a dark-coloured Tern passed me, which I did not recognise as it was getting dusk. Next day, when out fishing, the same bird came close to me, when I saw that it was a Black Tern. After this I saw it every day up to Aug. 14th, when, rough and stormy weather coming on, it disappeared. It seemed a fully adult bird, having no white about the head or throat. Whenever it approached any of the Arctic Terns, of which there is a colony breeding, several would set on it and drive it to a different part of the Lough. It appeared to be hawking for the Green-drake, *Ephemera danica*, of which there were numbers about. The flight of the Black Tern was very graceful and more rapid than that of the other Terns—more like that of a Swift, but, of course, much slower. I saw several fresh-laid Arctic Tern's eggs as late as Aug. 1st."—H. CHICHESTER HART (Carrablagh, Port Salen, Letterkenny).

Sand Martin in Co. Donegal.—I have already noticed the rarity of these birds in this county. On June 24th a pair were haunting the stream through our golf-links at Ballynatocher Strand, Port Salen.—H. C. HART.

Blackbird pairing with Thrush.—In a garden belonging to a gentleman residing in the north end of Edinburgh a pair of Blackbirds were engaged in rearing a second brood, when, after the full complement of eggs had been laid, a cat made the cock bird a widower. The poor bird, however, was not long in finding a mate ready to take the place of the deceased; but, to the amazement of the gentleman referred to, the foster-mother was no Blackbird, but a Song Thrush!—in all probability, one whose own family had just been safely reared in the same garden. Greatly interested in the new turn of affairs, my friend watched the pair closely, and found that the Blackbird was most assiduous in his attention to his partner, feeding her regularly during her incubation. The birds became very tame, showing no uneasiness when the children of the house visited their nest and fed their young. After a short time, however, a most

remarkable change occurred in the Blackbird's demeanour, for he became very jealous of the attention of his partner to his young, and eventually expelled her from the vicinity of the nest. He still continued, however, to show the most devoted affection to his progeny, feeding them with the greatest attention. Unfortunately I had not an opportunity of seeing the female Thrush, as her eviction had taken place previous to my visits; but that the foster-mother was none other than *Turdus musicus* is vouched for by the owner of the garden, who is a careful and accurate observer of Nature, as well as by his brother, by his children, who are unusually bright intelligent boys, and by the nursery maid—all of whom had frequent opportunities of observing the Thrush on the nest. It has been asserted that the Blackbird and Song Thrush occasionally interbreed in a wild state; but, so far as I am aware, no conclusive proof of their doing so has yet been obtained. In support of this assertion, the case I have just related is, I think, an interesting one, and I shall be glad to know if the experience of any of your readers can afford anything by way of corroboration.—J. K. DOBBIER (13, Leamington Terrace, Edinburgh).

Protection of Birds.—The committee of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society are very desirous of bringing under the notice of land-owners and agriculturists the great desirability of affording more efficient protection to useful birds, particularly those which, as destroyers of vermin and injurious insects, render immense service to the farmer and the community at large. Frequent comments and letters have recently appeared in the public journals as to the disastrous effects resulting from the indiscriminate slaughter of many useful species, not only in this country, but also on the Continent, and it is hoped that the publicity given and the attention drawn to the subject will lead to a more judicious course of action. The importance of this matter, in view of the great devastation caused by the plague of field voles (mice) in some parts of Scotland, and past experiences in Lincolnshire, cannot be overlooked, and the opinions of the Scotch farmers in the districts affected, quoted from the Reports to the Board of Agriculture, point to the folly of destroying owls, hawks, and weasels. The Barn Owl, a true farmers' friend, is much persecuted, but a more useful bird, as a destroyer of vermin, does not exist. It has been computed, by competent observers, that when it has young, it will bring a mouse to its nest every twelve or fifteen minutes, and as many as twenty good-sized rats, perfectly fresh, have been counted in a single nest. A recent communication to the daily papers states that a nest containing five young ones, being taken and placed under a hen-coop about a mile distant, no less than twenty-four rats, large and small, brought there by the parent birds, were found lying outside the coop the following morning. The owlets were at once returned to the place from whence they were taken. The Kestrel

Hawk, a great killer of mice, is another bird which merits protection, and it is much to be desired that game-preservers would give their keepers stringent orders not to molest it. It is greatly to be wished that some steps could be taken by those who have the control of the rivers and waterways of Norfolk to check the cruel and dangerous practice of shooting Swallows and Martins, which has of late become so frequent in this county, more especially in the neighbourhood of Norwich. To such an extent is the destruction of our native birds carried on, that it is not improbable further legislation in the matter will be called for, and it is to be hoped the Board of Agriculture will continue to prosecute their inquiries into the pecuniary loss accruing from such destruction. My committee earnestly trust that all lovers of Nature will, by their own example and influence with others, not only extend their protection to these our feathered friends, but will also do their best (in accordance with one of the fundamental objects of this Society) to aid in "the circulation of information which may dispel prejudices leading to their destruction."—W. A. NICHOLSON, Hon. Sec. Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society.

REPTILES.

Palmated Newt in Anglesea.—When shell-collecting last May I found this species in ditches, near the coast, in two places, about three miles apart, between Ty-croes and Valley. I got two males in each ditch, but failed to bring up a single female in my dredge. — CHAS. OLDHAM (Ashton-on-Mersey).

The Black Viper of Markwick.—I send you an extract from one of Markwick's MSS. (p. 195), which are in the possession of Mrs. Eversfield, of Denne Park, Horsham, and to which reference has been already made in 'The Zoologist' (1890, pp. 335, 379). It relates to a so-called "Black Viper" killed by him at Catsfield, near Battle, Sussex. I can find no mention anywhere of the additional poison-fangs in the Viper as described by him, and his remarks may perhaps lead some modern herpetologist to investigate the matter and report the result. My own viper-catching days are long past, I am sorry to say:—

"Catsfield, Oct. 10, 1780.

"THE BLACK VIPER, *Coluber prester*.

Synonyma.—*Coluber prester*, scutis abdominalibus 153, squamis caudalibus 32. Linn. Faun. Suec. p. 104, n. 287; Syst. Nat. ii. t. 377, n. 185. English Black Adder, *Vipera Anglica nigricans*, Pet. Mus. p. 17, n. 104. *Coluber prester*, Black Viper, Berk. Nat. Hist. i. p. p. 57, n. 2.

Description.—On the 19th of August, 1770, I killed a large female Viper with young ones in her that were alive; she was all over black except the extremity of the tail, which was of a yellowish colour underneath, and the blotches, or large spots (as in other Vipers) were of

somewhat deeper black, so as to be discernible from the rest of the body. I at that time thought it was only an accidental variety of the Common Viper, with respect to colour, but Mr. Berkenhout, in his 'Outlines of Natural History of Great Britain,' describes the Black Viper as a distinct species, under the name of *Coluber prester*, and says it is entirely black, tail very short, scutæ 153, scales 32. Exceedingly poisonous. On the 4th of September, 1794, another of these creatures was killed, from which I made a drawing, and the following remarks. Its length from the nose to the tip of the tail was 21 inches and a half, and in the thickest part its size was somewhat larger than a man's thumb. Its colour was exactly the same as in the foregoing. Its tail was very short, being only about two inches in length, and furnished with 32 squamæ or scales, as described by Linnæus; the abdominal scutæ were about 150, as near as I could count them. On one side of the upper jaw I discovered a long sharp-pointed tooth, or fang, with two shorter ones close to it on each side, as represented in the maagin, and, tho' I failed to discover it, make no doubt but there was the same apparatus on the other side. If I was not deceived (and I think I was not) in the appearance of this creature's poison-fang being assisted by two other shorter ones (as I have represented), and the Common Viper, *Coluber berus*, has only one poison-fang on each side of its upper jaw, it may account for the bite of this creature being more dangerous, and also remove all doubt with respect to its being a distinct species."

If not an individual malformation, it would surely be sufficient to constitute the reptile in question a distinct species from *Vipera berus*. I think it is quite worthy of investigation, and you may possibly think the extract worthy of insertion in 'The Zoologist.'—WILLIAM BORRER (Cowfold, Horsham).

INSECTS.

Abundance of *Cynthia cardui* in South Hants.—It may be interesting to some readers of 'The Zoologist' to know that the Painted Lady, *Cynthia cardui*, is extremely abundant in the Fareham district of South Hants. I noticed, first of all, about six of these butterflies at Portchester on May 25th. Since then the numbers have been increasing. On enquiring, I find that they are very common throughout this neighbourhood. May 25th is considered rather an early date for the appearance of this species, as the perfect insect usually appears in June.—ALEC GOLDNEY HEADLEY (Portchester).

The Mangel Wurzel Fly.—We are indebted to the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture for the following:—"The Board of Agriculture are receiving complaints of a somewhat extensive attack of the Mangel Wurzel Fly. A leaflet describing the insect and suggesting possible remedies will be issued immediately. Meantime it may be useful to remind growers of

mangels that dressings of nitrate of soda and common salt will force the growth of the plants, and that paraffin mixed with soft soap and water and put on with a powerful distributing machine would be efficacious in making the leaves distasteful to the insects, and prevent the maggots hatched afterwards from attacking them. The eggs can be seen under the leaves in infested fields."

Plague of *Tortrix viridana* in North Wales.—The oak woods of this district are again suffering from a very serious attack of the caterpillars of *Tortrix viridana*. Some of the largest woods have almost the appearance they present in winter, the brown branches of the oaks showing up in greater contrast by the presence here and there of a tree of some other species in full foliage. Though most of the insect-eating birds greedily devour this moth in its perfect state, I have noticed very few birds feeding on the caterpillars. The Chaffinch and the Great and Blue Titmouse, however, apparently do so. The moths are also largely eaten by two species of Bat which take them chiefly from the leaves and branches—namely, the Long-eared Bat and the Whiskered Bat, *V. mystacinus*. — G. H. CATON HAIGH (Aber-ia, Penrhyndeudraeth, Merionethshire).

The Mustard Beetle.—At the last meeting of the Linnean Society, held on June 16th, Mr. F. Enock exhibited a large number of specimens of this destructive little beetle, and gave an account of a visit which he had recently paid to a field of mustard which had been attacked near Cambridge. Every plant was more or less affected, the leaves being almost eaten up, and the beetles were everywhere swarming. Walking down a single row of mustard, sixty-five yards in length, he swept off with a butterfly-net enough beetles to fill a glass-jar which he carried with him. On reaching home, he counted a portion and, weighing the remainder, found that he had collected upwards of 15,000. Some idea may therefore be formed of the extent of injury done to the entire field.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

LINNEAN SOCIETY OF LONDON.

May 24, Anniversary Meeting.—Prof. STEWART, President, in the chair. Messrs. John Humphreys and Frederick Enock were admitted Fellows. The Treasurer presented his Annual Report, duly audited, and the Secretary having announced the elections and deaths during the past twelve months, the usual ballot took place for new members of Council, when the following were elected:—Messrs. E. L. Batters, William Carruthers, Herbert Druce,

Spencer Moore, and Dr. D. H. Scott. The President and Officers were re-elected. The Librarian's Report having been read, and certain formal business having been transacted, the President delivered his Annual Address, taking for his subject, "Commensalism and Symbiosis." On the motion of Dr. R. C. A. Prior, seconded by Mr. Jenner Weir, a cordial vote of thanks was accorded to the President for his able address, with a request that he would allow it to be printed.

The Society's Gold Medal was then formally presented to Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, in recognition of the service rendered by him to zoological science by numerous valuable publications. After Dr. Wallace had replied, the President announced the gift, by Dr. R. C. A. Prior, of an Oxy-hydrogen Lantern for use at the evening meetings, and moved a vote of thanks to him for his valuable donation. This having been carried by acclamation, the proceedings terminated.

June 2.—Prof. STEWART, President, in the chair.

The Vice-Presidents for the year having been nominated by the President, and a vote of thanks to the Officers of the Society having been proposed by Mr. Thomas Christy, seconded by Mr. C. J. Breese, and carried, a ballot took place, when the following were declared to be elected:—Messrs. H. A. James, J. R. Leeson, W. B. Scott, R. H. Wallace, and E. H. Allen.

Mr. H. Bernard exhibited specimens and made remarks on the probably poisonous nature of the hairs and claws of an Arachnid (*Galeodes*).

On behalf of Capt. Douglas Phillott, there was exhibited a curious case of malformation in the beak of an Indian Parrakeet, *Palæornis torquatus*. The upper mandible was so abnormally decurved as to almost penetrate between the rami of the lower mandible, and although the bird was apparently in good health at the time it was shot by Capt. Phillott at Dera Ismail Khan, Pubjab, in March last, it was evident that had it not been killed then, death must have soon ensued from a severance of the trachea by the sharp extremity of the prolonged mandible.

Mr. D. Morris exhibited and made some very instructive remarks on plants yielding Sissal hemp in the Bahamas and Yucatan, and pointed out their distribution and mode of growth. He also exhibited and described the preparation of a gut silk from Formosa and Kiangchow.

Mr. Scott Elliott gave a brief account of a journey he had made to the west coast of Africa, and described the character of the vegetation of the particular region explored, and the plants collected by him.

Mr. Jenner Weir exhibited and made remarks on a species of Psyche.

On behalf of Mr. Ernest Floyer, a paper was read by the Secretary on the disappearance of certain desert plants in Egypt through the agency of the Camel.

Mr. F. Perry Coste gave an abstract of a paper on the chemistry of the colours in insects, chiefly Lepidoptera. The paper was criticised by Prof. Meldola, who was unable to accept the views expressed, the results of the experiments made being, in his opinion, inconclusive.

The meeting was brought to a close by the exhibition of an excellent oxy-hydrogen lantern, recently presented to the Society by Dr. R. C. A. Prior, when Dr. R. B. Sharpe exhibited a number of coloured slides of birds designed to illustrate the interesting subject of mimicry and protective coloration.

The President announced that the last meeting of the session would take place on Thursday, June 16th.

June 16.—Prof. STEWART, President, in the chair.

Mr. J. R. Leeson was admitted and Messrs. T. Cooke, F. J. Clarke, and J. Mellor were elected Fellows of the Society.

Mr. F. Enock exhibited some specimens of the Mustard Beetle, and gave an account of its recent depredations as observed by himself in Cambridgeshire. So numerous was it that in walking down a single row of mustard, a distance of sixty-five yards, he had captured with a butterfly-net upwards of 15,000, as he subsequently ascertained by counting a portion and weighing the remainder. The crop of mustard thus affected he regarded as destroyed.

Mr. R. J. Pocock exhibited and made some remarks upon a species of *Peripatus* (*P. juliformis*), from St. Vincent, of which five specimens had been collected by Mr. H. H. Smith for the Committee investigating the fauna and flora of the Lesser Antilles. The species was originally described so long ago as 1828 by the Rev. L. Guilding (Zool. Journ. vol. ii.), but from that time until the present no additional specimens had been procured there. As Guilding's types had been lost, and his descriptions are wanting in detail, this re-discovery was of considerable interest.

Mr. George Murray exhibited and described the type of a new order of Algæ, to which the name *Splachnidium rugosum* was given.

A paper was read by Prof. J. R. Henderson, entitled "Contributions to Indian Carcinology," and embodied an account of several little-known crustaceans, and descriptions of some new species.

Mr. H. B. Guppy read a paper on "the Thames as an agent in plant dispersal," in which several interesting facts were brought out, the observations being illustrated by specimens collected by the author, and a useful record given of the effects of exposure to sea-water, and of freezing upon the germinating power of seeds.

Prof. F. Oliver gave an abstract of observations made by Miss M. F. Ewart on some abnormal developments of the flowers of *Cypripedium*, illustrated by effective diagrams in coloured chalk.

Mr. R. J. Pocock contributed some "Supplementary Notes on the Fauna of the Mergui Archipelago," the result of his examination of some fresh material which had lately come to hand.

The evening was brought to a close by an exhibition by Mr. Carruthers, with the aid of the oxy-hydrogen lantern, of some beautiful slides of sections of fossil plants. A second series (zoological) exhibited by the President, included several minute organisms of extreme interest.

This meeting brought the session of 1892-93 to a close.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

May 17.—Prof. W. H. FLOWER, C.B., LL.D., F.R.S., President, in the chair.

Mr. W. T. Blanford exhibited and made remarks on the skin of a Wild Camel obtained by Major C. S. Cumberland in Eastern Turkestan.

In a paper "On the Geographical Distribution of the Land Mollusca of the Philippine Islands," the Rev. A. H. Cooke showed that the distribution of the different subgenera of *Cochlostyla* affords an interesting clue to the early relations of the various islands of the Philippine group. Regarded from this point of view, the central islands, Samar, Leyte, Bohol, Cebu, Negros, and Panay, with Luzon, were closely related, while Mindoro and Mindanao were remarkably isolated even from their nearest neighbours. An examination of the intervening seas accounted for these phenomena, the depths between the central islands being inconsiderable, while Mindoro and Mindanao are surrounded by very deep water. The Mollusca of the two ridges between the Philippines and Borneo, formed by Busuanga, Palawan, and Balabac, and by the Sulu Archipelago, were partly Philippine, partly Indo-Malay. Two remarkable groups of *Helix*, peculiar to Mindoro, Busuanga, and Palawan, showed relations with Celebes and possibly with New Guinea. The Mollusca of the Batan, Tular, and Talantse Islands were also discussed. Regarded as a whole, the Land Mollusca of the Philippines were stated to contain:—(1) Indo-Malay, (2) Polynesian, (3) indigenous elements, the first decidedly predominating.

A communication was read from Graf Hans von Berlepsch and Herr J. Stolzmann, containing an account of a collection of birds made by Herr J. Kalinowski in the vicinity of Lima and Ica, in Western Peru. The species of which examples were obtained in these localities were eighty in number. In an Appendix an account of previous authorities on the same subject was added.

Mr. G. A. Boulenger gave an account of *Lucioperca marina*, a rare species of fish, originally described by Pallas from the Black Sea and the Caspian, and little known of late years.

A communication from Mr. Oldfield Thomas, contained a revision of the Antelopes of the genus *Cephalolophus*, of which eighteen species were recognised as valid. A new species was described as *Cephalolophus jentinki*, from Liberia.

Prof. Bell called attention to the remarkable amount of variation presented by *Pontaster tenuispinis*, numerous examples of which he had been enabled to examine and compare. He came to the conclusion that several North Atlantic species, which had been described as distinct, should be regarded as belonging to it.

A communication was read from Mr. H. H. Druce, giving an account of the Butterflies of the family *Lycanidæ*, of the South Pacific Islands. Of thirty-one species mentioned, seven were described as new to science.

June 14.—Prof. W. H. FLOWER, C.B., LL.D., F.R.S., President, in the chair.

The Secretary read a report on the additions that had been made to the Society's Menagerie during the month of May, 1892, calling special attention to a pair of the rare and beautiful Passerine bird, the Grey Colly-Srike, *Hypocolius ampelinus*, from Fao, Persian Gulf, presented by Mr. W. D. Cumming. He also made some remarks on the most interesting objects observed during a recent visit to the Zoological Gardens of Rotterdam, the Hague, Amsterdam, and Antwerp.

A communication from Mr. T. D. A. Cockerell, contained particulars of the occurrence of a species of Jacana, *Jacana spinosa*, in Jamaica.

Dr. John Anderson exhibited and made remarks on some specimens of the Mole-Rat, *Spalax typhlus*, from Egypt.

Prof. Romanes gave an account of some results recently obtained from the cross-breeding of Rats and of Rabbits, and showed that it did not follow that a blending of the characters of the parents was the result of crossing two different varieties.

Prof. Howes exhibited and made remarks on some photographs received from Prof. Parker, of Otago, New Zealand, illustrative of Sea-Lions, Penguins, and Albatrosses in their native haunts.

Dr. Dawson made remarks on the Fur-Seal of Alaska, and exhibited a series of photographs illustrating the attitudes and mode of life of these animals.

Mr. Selater called attention to the habits of a South-African Snake, *Dasypeltis scabra*, as exhibited by an example now in the Society's Gardens. He also read some extracts from a letter addressed to him by Mr. H. H. Johnston, C.B., announcing the despatch of a consignment of Natural-History specimens illustrative of the fauna and flora of the Shiré Highlands.

Mr. W. Saville Kent exhibited and made remarks on some photographs of a species of the genus *Podargus*, showing the strange attitudes of these birds in a living state.

Mr. F. E. Beddard read a paper on the Brain and Muscular Anatomy of *Aulacodus*.

Mr. Gerard W. Butler read a paper on the subdivision of the body-cavity in Snakes, being a continuation of the subject treated of in a memoir on the subdivision of the body-cavity in Lizards, Crocodiles, and Birds, previously read before the Society.

Mr. J. W. Gregory gave an account of his researches on the British Paleogene Bryozoa, of which he recognised thirty species, represented in the National Collection by about 750 specimens.

Mr. Sclater gave an account of a small collection of Birds from Anguilla, West Indies, made by Mr. W. R. Elliott, one of the collectors employed by the Committee for the exploration of the Lesser Antilles.

Prof. G. J. Romanes read a paper on a seemingly new diagnostic character of the primates, which was that the terminal joints of both hands and feet in all species of this order are destitute of hairs. This rule did not apply to the Lemurs.

Mr. O. Thomas read a paper on the genus *Echinops*, of the order Insectivora, with notes on the dentition of the allied genera *Ericulus* and *Centetes*.

Mr. G. A. Boulenger gave an account of the Reptiles and Batrachians collected by Mr. C. Hose on Mount Dulit, North Borneo. Amongst these was a fine new Lizard of the genus *Varanus*, proposed to be called *V. heteropholis*. The two Batrachians were also described as *Rhacophorus dulitensis* and *Nectophryne hosii*.

A paper was read by Lieut.-Col. H. H. Godwin-Austen on new species and new species and varieties of the Land Molluscan genus *Diplommata*, collected by himself, and more recently by Mr. W. Doherty, in the Naga and Munnipur Hill ranges. The author described twenty-seven supposed new species, the most remarkable being *D. unicrenata*, with a peculiarly-formed peristome.

A communication was read from Mr. B. B. Woodward on the mode of growth and the structure of the shell in *Velates conoideus*, Lamk., and in other *Neritida*. The mode of growth and the structure of this shell were described as follows:—Up to a certain point the growth is normal; a change in the direction of growth afterwards takes place, and the test is enlarged by the addition of fresh shelly matter on the exterior of the under side and by the removal of previously-formed layers on the inner surface. The internal septum that serves the purpose of a myophore was shown to have originated in the paries, which, in the course of growth, had been replaced by the septum. In this respect *Velates conoideus* epitomised in its life-history conditions which are found in distinct recent species of the closely-allied genus *Neritina*. The relations of the paries and septum in this last genus were also described.

This meeting closed the Session 1891-2.—P. L. SCLATER, *Secretary*.

ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

June 1, 1892.—R. McLACHLAN, Esq., F.R.S., Treasurer, in the chair.

The Hon. Walter Rothschild sent for exhibition *Neptis mimetica*, n.s., from Timor, mimicking *Andasena orope*, one of the Euplœidæ, and *Cynthia equicolor*, n.s., a species remarkable for the similarity of the two sexes, from the same locality; also a hybrid between *Saturnia carpini* and *S. pyri*, and specimens of *Callimorpha dominula*, var. *romancvii*, var. *italica*, and var. *donna*, bred by a collector at Zurich; he further exhibited a very large and interesting collection of Rhopalocera made by Mr. W. Doherty in Timor, Pura, Sumba, and other islands, during October and November, 1891. Col. Swinhoe remarked that the various species of *Neptis* were usually protected and imitated by other insects, and did not themselves mimic anything, and that the pattern of the *Neptis* in question was very common among the butterflies in the Timor group. Mr. Jenner Weir, Prof. Meldola, Mr. Trimen, and others continued the discussion.

Mons. A. Wailly exhibited about fifty species of Australian Lepidoptera, mostly from Queensland, and fertile ova of *Trilocha varians*, which are arranged in small square cells, fastened together in large numbers, and present an appearance quite different from the usual type of Lepidopterous ova.

Mr. F. Merrifield exhibited a series of *Drepana fulcataria*, half of which had been exposed for a week or two, in March or April, to a temperature of about 77°, and the other half had been allowed to emerge at the natural out-door temperature. The latter insects were in all cases darker than the former, all being equally healthy. Mr. McLachlan, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Jenner Weir, and others took part in the discussion which followed.

Mr. C. G. Barrett exhibited a curious variety of the male of *Arctia mendica*, bred by the Rev. W. F. Johnson, of Armagh.

Canon Fowler exhibited the egg-case of a species of Mantidæ from Lake Nyassa, and specimens of *Bledius dissimilis*, Er., from Bridlington Quay, Yorkshire.

Mr. McLachlan called attention to the re-appearance in large numbers of the Diamond-back Moth, *Plutella cruciferarum*, which was very abundant in gardens near London, and expressed his opinion that the moths had been bred in the country and had not immigrated.

Mr. Jenner Weir, Mr. Bower, and Prof. Meldola stated that they had recently seen specimens of *Colias edusa* in different localities near London.

Mr. Jenner Weir and others also commented on the large immigration of *Plusia gamma*, and also on the appearance of a large number of *Cynthia cardui* and other Vanessidæ.

The Hon. Walter Rothschild communicated a paper on two new species of *Pseudacraa*.—W. W. FOWLER, Hon. Sec.

